

# TEAM HEART HIGHLIGHTS

*Saving Young Hearts, Building Bright Futures*

APRIL/MAY 2025

In April, Rwanda commemorates the 31st anniversary of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi. This month is a time for reflection and remembrance of more than 1,000,000 individuals who were killed beginning in April 1994. It is both a period of profound sadness and a time to reaffirm the commitment to ensure that Rwanda never again becomes a country divided by hatred and violence. Rwanda has taken a monumental step toward unity and reconciliation, marking a significant milestone in the nation's healing journey three decades after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Rwanda is viewed by many countries as a model of reconciliation and healing for the world.

In 2008, Team Heart was invited to embark on our first surgical development trip, beginning on April 6, to symbolize a new beginning and highlight the progress the country has made in healthcare. Today, we pay tribute to acknowledge the significant progress and advancements that Rwanda has achieved during this time of healing and progress.

## Kwibuka - To Remember

### DR. MARTIN ZAMMERT

Team Heart Volunteer, and Cardiac Anesthesiologist and Critical Care physician, Martin Zammert from Lahey Medical Center near Boston, is taking the lead on the next surgical program to improve cardiac surgery in a country where a sustainable program that does not yet exist.

Currently evaluating four requests from countries who have reached out requesting assistance, Martin will be coordinating teams to visit and evaluate what is needed. We hope to share the lessons we have learned in Rwanda which could help another country bridge the gap and expand the care they provide in a shorter period of time. Again working with partners to make a bigger impact and save more lives. For those programs on the African continent, using Rwanda colleagues to collaborate and share solutions learned will be utilized. Martin will be traveling to Ghana with partner teams, Hearts of Ghana and Global Cardiac Consortium in November 2025.



Martin Zammert & Anesthesiologist Paulin Banguti

### Team Heart Tidbits

- A peer-reviewed scientific article, accepted for publication will be released in the next two months, and a second publication about the cost of cardiac surgery in resource-poor settings.
- Three posters have been accepted at the University of Colorado Anschutz School of Medicine Global Health Day by our medical students who spent time in Rwanda with our local team in 2024.
- George Gasana, MD is doing well at Tenwek during his gap year functioning as an attending in General Surgery and supporting Cardiac Surgery when time permits. He will join the next cohort in Cardiac Surgery Training Fellowship by January 2026.
- We are in the final review of applicants for the Country Director. We had an amazing pool of wonderful applicants and we are excited to be close to selection. Watch for announcements in our next newsletter. The Country Director role is incredibly important and will shape future involvement in Rwanda.

### Double Your Impact This Mother's Day - \$2,000 Match Challenge!

Honor Moms. Help Patients. Your Gift Doubled Today.

This Mother's Day, you can give more than flowers— you can give hope.

Thanks to a generous donor, every dollar you give will be matched, up to \$2,000 to support Team Heart. That means your \$50 becomes \$100, and your \$100 becomes \$200—twice the impact for patients in need. Whether it's providing medication or transportation to healthcare your support makes a difference. And today, it goes twice as far.

🌸 Give now and help us unlock the full \$2,000 match in honor of the moms who make everything possible. 🌸

**Mother's Day Match**

Thank you for standing with Team Heart—and with mothers everywhere this Mother's Day.

### APRIL UPDATES FROM KIGALI

**RWANDAN NURSES SHARING:** One of our current research projects. "Using Technology to Increase Access and Quality of Care in Patients With Cardiac Disease Through Secure Image Storage and Sharing of Echocardiography Studies in Rwanda" is in the final weeks of the data collection phase. For the first time, nurses in select District Hospitals can record images and share them with a cardiologist in Kigali to improve access to care, and quality of care, and decrease costs for patients. A key benefit of enhancing skills and empowering nurses responsible for identifying patients at the point of entry into the healthcare system is that it has engaged nurses who were previously isolated in their assessments. One of the project goals to change how physicians and nurses work collaboratively to improve care has already proven successful. This project is funded by Edwards Lifesciences, Caption Health/GE Healthcare, and donors like you.

**PERFUSION SYSTEMS DONATIONS:** Long-time volunteers, Daniel and Susan Anderson visited King Faisal Hospital in April to assemble three cardiac perfusion systems (heart-lung machines) generously donated by Bryan Health (NE) and Concord Hospital (NH). These systems replace systems donated more than 10 years ago and are current models and incredibly valuable. The systems were delivered in a ceremony to King Faisal and handed over to lead cardiac surgeon, Dr. Maurice Musoni. This generous donation will provide one for adults, one for children, and one for emergency back-up. Dan will continue to support perfusion through education in their newly established Cardiac Perfusion Training program which begins in May 2025.

**WEHRLI FAMILY FOUNDATION GRANT:** Post-operative follow-up is the focus through a program aimed at patient adherence to monitor their health and improving nurses' skills and knowledge, supported by a generous grant from the Wehrli Family Foundation. A unique aspect of this program is the development of an app that utilizes SMS or text messaging to remind patients about check-ups and to help nurses track patients who may have missed their appointments. The app has been developed and is scheduled for beta testing in May 2025.



Rheinhard Stevenson, Daniel Anderson and Rwanda Perfusionist Peter Adams



Handover of perfusion equipment donations